

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5113

S E C R E T AMMAN 4769

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

EE.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, US, JO, XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER

REF: SECTO 06055

1. CONVEYED MESSAGE REFTEL TO PRIME MINISTER WHO WAS GRATEFUL. SAYS HE SEES HOPEFUL SIGNS FOR FUTURE AND STILL REMAINS OPTIMISTIC. PAID SPECIAL ATTENTION TO STATEMENT THAT SYRIAN-ISRAELI EFFORTS ARE REQUIRED OR A FOLLOW-ON AND THAT ANY NEXT STEP WITH EGYPT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IN ISOLATION.

2. MAIN SUBJECT ON HIS MIND, AS IT WAS WITH KING WHEN I SAW HIM BRIEFLY MORNING JULY 14 AT AIRPORT, WAS QUESTION OF CONGRESSIONAL EFFORTS TO BLOCK HAWK AND AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT SALE TO JORDAN.

3. RIFAI WAS CATEGORICAL ON TWO POINTS: (A) THAT JORDAN WOULD HAVE TO GO WHEREVER NECESSARY TO GET AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT. AT SOME COST IN ITS RELATIONS WITH SYRIA IT HAD HELD OUT FOR US EQUIPMENT. IT WANTED US EQUIPMENT AND WOULD PAY CASH AND WAS NOT ASKING FOR AID. BUT IF THE US COULD NOT HELP, AND IT WOULD BE A MOST SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT FOR THEM IF THE US COULD NOT, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO GO WHEREVER THEY COULD

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TO GET ASSISTANCE. FOR THE FIRST TIME JORDAN WOULD

THEN HAVE TO SACRIFICE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US TO ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS ARAB FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS AND BACKERS. IT WOULD NOT BE A PLEASANT CHOICE, BUT IF PUT IN THAT POSITION ON VITAL ISSUE OF AIR DEFENSE, JORDAN WOULD HAVE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE. SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE MEETING HIM ON JULY 28 IN THE FIRST JOINT HIGH COMMISSION MEETING AND THERE WOULD BE PRESSURE FOR STATIONING SYRIAN TROOPS HERE WHICH UP TO NOW HAD BEEN RESISTED ON THE BASIS THAT JORDAN WANTED AND WAS GETTING US AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT AND HAD NO NEED FOR SYRIAN HELP. A SECOND FACTOR (B) WAS THAT JORDAN HAD USED HAWK SALE AS AN ARGUMENT AGAINST A JOINT COMMAND WITH SYRIA MAKING IT CLEAR TO SYRIANS THAT COMMAND WOULD UNDERCUT GOJ'S ABILITY TO BUY HAWKS FROM THE US WHICH IT WANTED. IF US NOW REFUSED TO SELL, THEN REVERSE LOGIC WOULD APPLY AND THEN WOULD BE NO RATIONALE FOR JORDAN ON WHICH TO BASE ITS RESISTANCE TO SYRIAN INTEREST IN AND PRESSURE FOR A JOINT COMMAND.

4. RIFAI CONCLUDED, AS KING HAS, THAT THIS IS MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP AND HARKED BACK TO THE SOVIET ARTILLERY DEAL IN 1969-1970 WHEN AT THE LAST MOMENT US CHANGED ITS MIND AND AGREED TO PROVIDE MILITARY SUPPORT FOR JORDAN IN A TIME OF INTENSE NEED, BUT WITH UNHAPPY RESULTS IN JORDAN'S RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS AND OTHER ARABS.
PICKERING

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